

**DOCUMENT RESUME**

ED 076 091

HE 003 943

AUTHOR Hornig, Lilli S.  
TITLE Affirmative Action Through Affirmative Attitudes.  
INSTITUTION New York State Education Dept., Albany.  
PUB DATE Nov 72  
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at a conference on "Women in Higher Education," Syracuse, Novem' 28, 1972  
  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; Changing Attitudes; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Females; Feminism; \*Higher Education; \*Sex Discrimination; \*Speeches; \*Women Professors; \*Womens Education

## ABSTRACT

Women have been traditionally discriminated against in higher education, from the point of admissions to school through faculty hiring and administrative appointments. Such discrimination has been based in the past on the attitudes perpetuated by a man-made society that dictates that women have as their only purpose in life marriage and child-rearing. Such attitudes further dictate that women are untrustworthy employees in faculty and higher positions, a belief held because of the opinion of many that women could not possibly be dedicated to academic and scholarly pursuits. Recent legislation demands that hiring and promotion policies in higher education not discriminate against women and other minorities. Such legislation, however, cannot guarantee that discriminatory attitudes will be eradicated with discriminatory practices. It is hoped that affirmative action in equal opportunities for jobs might in the future lead to affirmative action in attitudes. (HS)

"WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION"  
Conference Sponsored by New York State Education Department  
Syracuse, New York - November 28, 1972  
Lilli S. Hornig

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION THROUGH AFFIRMATIVE ATTITUDES

ED 076091

4/500 3943

The subject of affirmative action in universities, bringing with it the necessity for locating, recruiting, hiring, and promoting women, seems to produce even more malaise among academic administrators than discussions of budgets. Unpleasant as the topic of finances may be, it is at least something they feel familiar with. But women as something other than secretaries, wives, or sex objects - women as serious students, professional colleagues, or even authority figures, are a whole new dimension in academic life. While everyone seems to subscribe in principle to the idea of full professional equality for women, implementing that principle is a difficult and often acrimonious process. It is a little like a story told about President Eliot of Harvard; he had been in the habit of taking Sunday afternoon tea for many years with a couple of rather pleasant maiden ladies, and had often wondered why they had never married. One day he finally mustered the courage to ask them. The elder of the ladies replied, "Marriage, Mr. Eliot, merely tends to enhance the natural antipathy between the sexes."

That often seems to be the outcome of affirmative action discussions too. Women get more bitter as they review the results of past discrimination and contemplate the slow pace of improvement, and men get more aggressive as they are made to feel guilty for a situation for which most of them bear little blame individually. Nonetheless, the law now requires us all either to act out that natural antipathy in a new context or to accommodate ourselves peacefully to the new necessities. I hope we will choose the latter alternative. Today I would like to explore some of the

important problems involved in this process of accomodation. If I touch in passing on some sore spots, as I will have to, I hope you will forgive me.

I think it is well to remember that all of us, male and female, are the products of the Freudian age in academia. Freud was surely not the first man to bolster his own already considerable ego by putting down women, but he was probably the first man since St. Paul whose ideas on the subject became so institutionalized. Briefly, he believed that women are anatomically deprived and therefore also psychologically incomplete and inferior, useful chiefly as bearers of children and comforters of men. From this he developed the theory, further elaborated by modern psychologists all the way to Erik Erikson, that men are by nature aggressive, enterprising, resourceful, and active, while women are submissive, docile, accomodating, and passive - all more or less pejorative terms. Moreover, any woman who cannot or will not fit herself into this stereotype and resign herself to a second-class role in life is by definition a defective specimen. Right up until the present, psychologists wonder why it is women have so much trouble adjusting to their "proper" role that three times as many women as men require psychiatric counselling or treatment.

Myths about what women can and cannot do pervade our lives, in and out of the university. Women get good grades but have no imagination. They do well in humanities but not in science. They are good at routine work but do not have ideas. They may have jobs but they should not have careers. They work for pin money, to buy luxuries, not to support themselves or anyone else. You may entrust your children's lives to them, but they have no sense of responsibility. When they get a notion they'll nag you to death but they have no perseverance and drive. You may let them drive

the kids to school and your aged mother to the hospital but you can't wait to tell the latest woman driver joke when you get home. Family cooking has to be done by women, but chefs are men. The list can be extended almost indefinitely, and the attitudes are neatly summed up in the riddle of the man and his son who were in an accident. The man was killed, and the son was rushed to the hospital in critical condition. There the surgeon took one look at him and said, "I can't operate on this boy - he's my son." Who was the surgeon? If it takes you a minute to figure out the answer you are at the right meeting.

In the academic context, we will each have to recognize these ingrained discriminatory attitudes within ourselves before we can make much progress toward overcoming them. The concept of Affirmative Action is a tool designed to facilitate the equalization of opportunities for employment; as such it bypasses the underlying problem of attitudes, but presupposes that everyone truly desires a world of equal opportunity for men and women of all races and creeds. Unfortunately this assumption is not yet justified; the reason why Affirmative Action programs are so bitterly criticized is precisely that when equal opportunity is granted to all, those who have heretofore been privileged will have to give up some of what they regard as their natural prerogatives.

To me this is not a matter for negotiation around a conference table. I do not intend to bargain with anyone for the basic human rights which the law and soon, I hope, the Constitution guarantee to me. But I do intend to see that those guarantees are enforced, by whatever means necessary.

Martha Peterson has recently pointed out that the application of Civil Rights legislation to educational institutions merely requires these institutions to translate into action the moral

principles of equality which they have long espoused in theory. If the universities had themselves willingly undertaken the responsibility for living as they professed to teach others to do, they would not now be facing the specter of government intervention in their own internal affairs. While one may rightly question whether universities are suitable institutions for spearheading social change, they do unquestionably bear the responsibility for making certain that basic human rights are safeguarded within their own establishments.

Even a quick survey of the present status of women in academia makes it plain that the universities have not discharged that responsibility. There is discrimination at all levels. College admissions practices are blatantly discriminatory toward women in major ways. Fewer women than men are admitted - the national ratio now stands at 46% women and 54% men; while the ablest girls can all get into some sort of college, the best and most selective universities maintain an average ratio of only 40:60, which means that many of our best women cannot get the best education we offer. The highly selective private universities have even lower proportions of women. Financial aid favors men, granting them, on the average, 20% larger scholarships than women, who must often also pay larger fees because of different residential requirements. Women of average ability stand a much lower chance of being admitted at all than men in that category. Some colleges even make sure that traditional stereotypes are not disturbed by selecting their applicants to fit expectations; one institution, for example, admits equal percentages of male and female candidates with verbal SAT scores over 700, but admits 91% of males and only 85% of females with mathematical SAT scores in the highest range. Thus the conventional belief in the mathematical superiority of men is neatly substantiated.

Instances of discrimination in college, subtle and not so subtle, are legion; they range from inferior career counselling and placement through denigration and ridicule in class all the way to the demand for sexual favors in return for good grades.

In sum, from college admissions to tenure level and top administration, women become progressively scarcer, but it is interesting to note that the two biggest drops occur between the master's and doctoral degrees and between non-tenured and tenured ranks. More women than men drop out of graduate school without completing Ph.D.'s; much of this may indeed be due to societal pressures, role modelling, and family responsibilities. But when one considers the active discrimination exercised against women in graduate schools (recently so widely documented, as for instance in the Berkeley report), and when one takes into account the lower financial support of women students coupled with their much lower earning capacity and bleak academic employment prospects, the surprising thing is not how few women complete their doctorates, but how many do. It is interesting to note, too, that their share of doctorates, nationwide and across all disciplines, has risen from about 10% to a little over 13% in the last decade. Plainly, it takes quite a lot to discourage them.

That there is indeed plenty of discouragement cannot be doubted, and much of it comes at the critical juncture between junior and senior faculty appointments. Until the recent job shortage it has not been unduly hard for women to obtain short-term appointments as instructors and even assistant professors; and they have always been welcome in such off-ladder posts as lecturers. The universities needed teachers for the ever-growing student bodies, and women, after all, were moderately acceptable as teachers. So they were hired, in proportions roughly comparable

to their presence in the doctorate population, for these lower, non-tenured ranks. They were paid less than men with equivalent qualifications and given different and less prestigious responsibilities - heavier teaching loads and therefore less time for research; less research support and more student counselling; less service on prestige committees and more on the invisible but time-consuming ones. They were also hired largely by different types of institutions, of lesser prestige in the academic hierarchy; women faculty members are found predominantly in two and four-year colleges, and in women's colleges, as opposed to universities, and are therefore even less likely to achieve visibility and professional recognition. Thus we find women concentrated heavily in the lowest ranks; of all the women on faculties almost 35% are instructors, and another 29% are assistant professors; only about 9% of them achieve full professorships nationally, the majority in fields such as home economics, languages, and education. At prestige universities at most 2 to 3% of full professorships are held by women. We take another quantum jump at the top administrative level, where only 0.7% of presidents are lay women, and their numbers are still declining.

The end result of the process is summarized by the figures on academic salaries gathered by the American Council on Education. Almost two-thirds of all the women employed on college and university faculties earn less than \$10,000 a year, while only about 28% of the men are in this lowest category. But the picture changes rapidly as we go up the salary scale. The percentage of all men in the \$14,000 to \$20,000 range is three times as large as the percentage of women, and over \$20,000 it is 5.5 times as large. The actual numbers of men employed in all ranks are, of course, much greater than the numbers of women, by about 500%.

I mention these unpalatable facts not just for the purpose of doing a little sly consciousness-raising but because they form the necessary background to a discussion of affirmative attitudes. In order to decide where we need to go and how we can get there, we need first to know where we are and how we got there.

Effective affirmative action has two distinct aspects:

1) non-discrimination in all hiring, promotion, and other employment practices, and 2) the establishment of goals and timetables directed toward achieving a truly non-discriminatory situation. It is the second of these efforts that is exciting the most bitter-controversy because it is so easy to attack on unrelated grounds; it is questioned, for example, on the grounds that goals are hard to distinguish from quotas, and we all know too well how insidiously quotas may be used to exclude rather than include.

Nonetheless I do not find it too difficult to make the semantic and conceptual distinction between a quota on the one hand, which traditionally operates as a ceiling on numbers, and a goal on the other, which is an end to which one aspires and which one hopes to reach. The establishment of goals and timetables is also attacked because it is thought to expose universities to undue outside interference. Goals and timetables involve evaluation, disclosure of certain records, and the long arm of government meddling in institutional affairs. Affirmative action does entail certain very limited problems in the areas of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, but to argue that a law is inapplicable because it does not conform to established practice is not valid.

Today I do not want to debate the implementation of guidelines in detail, but want to turn instead to the principle of non-discrimination in academic employment practices. It is never openly challenged because, of course, it would be unacceptable to do so.

yet it is in this area that some of the most fundamental problems arise. The argument most widely advanced in support of the status quo, and thus in non-support of non-discrimination, is the argument of quality. Faculties and administrations in whose ranks women and minority group members are grossly underrepresented or totally absent will maintain staunchly that they never hire anyone but the most qualified person, who somehow almost always turns out to be a white male. The litany of reasons for not hiring a woman candidate, provided one appears on the list at all, is extensive. If she is unmarried that is grounds for suspicion - what's wrong with her? If she decides to get married, she'll certainly leave. If she is married, what if she should have children? If she already has children - well, she can't be seriously interested in an academic job, she ought to be home taking care of them, she'll never be available when you need her. If she is divorced, she's obviously unstable and untrustworthy. And if you think I'm making up all these statements, they can all be documented. You will note that none of these reasons have the remotest connection with academic quality, yet they are frequently cited. It should be pointed out that if they are given as justification for not hiring a particular woman they are all actionable in court.

A second common body of reasons does deal with qualifications, though not necessarily with quality. It contains such statements as, for example, that women only want to teach, not do research, and a quality faculty must do both. Whether the statement is true is hard to ascertain. Women on faculties do comparatively more teaching and less research, but it is not possible to establish that they do so from choice or inclination and not necessity. We have already seen that female department members tend to be hired for the "teaching" jobs and are seldom encouraged in their research

or rewarded for it with grants, prizes, and other honors. On the other hand, the ranks of research personnel as opposed to straight faculty positions are filled with women - all doing research. This happens, of course, because such positions are less prestigious, not on the tenure ladder, and therefore more accessible to women. The situation is rather like that in other areas where discrimination exists. In industry, for example, women are routinely found in dull, repetitive jobs like assembling small components, because it is said that they excel at fine work; that the work is grossly underpaid is not mentioned. In medicine, on the other hand, where surgery is the most lucrative specialty, men must plainly be much better at fine work, because almost all surgeons are men.

Another frequently cited reason for not promoting women is that although their routine academic ability seems to be excellent they somehow lack the drive and motivation required for the top positions. Like so many of the arguments in this whole field, this one is another self-fulfilling prophecy. Women quite obviously need more drive and motivation than men to persist at all in academic pursuits, and a woman who has achieved even an assistant professorship is in all likelihood both better qualified and more highly motivated than her male colleagues. If discriminatory practices block her route to advancement, no amount of drive will get her there.

The assumption underlying all these arguments is that in order to hire more women for faculty positions, standards will have to be lowered. Implicit in that assumption is the thesis that in this best of all possible academic worlds, recruiting and selection processes have always operated to produce, by definition, the best of all possible faculty members. It takes only a cursory look at any faculty in the country to demonstrate that this is not

true. The usual limited recruiting procedures for academic posts, best described as the old-boy network, have operated not only effectively to exclude women and minorities but also to encumber faculties with a certain amount of male white dead wood. The fact is, of course, that any new faculty appointment entails a certain risk, and not all of them can be expected to pan out. A young candidate of limited experience and background must be evaluated in terms of future promise and ultimate potential for sound teaching and brilliant scholarship, with the hope that these qualities will eventually reflect credit back on the institution. This risk is peculiar to the nature of the academic enterprise; for while hiring for a corporation, for example, also entails the problem of estimating future potential on the basis of very limited past history, there are more possibilities for burying the recruiter's mistakes. They can, for instance, be moved horizontally to more suitable jobs, such as from research into marketing. In an academic hierarchy this is not possible, and if you are not good enough to move up, you have to move out. During a period of rapid expansion like the 60's, of course, there was more opportunity for people of less than top talent to move up than there is now or will be in the foreseeable future.

What makes these considerations relevant to Affirmative Action as it applies to women is that if you read a great many resumes and dossiers, as I do, a curious fact emerges: a young man is routinely evaluated in terms of his future promise, because that is what everyone is used to doing. But a young woman is not really believed to have a future and is almost invariably evaluated only in terms of past performance, of what she has already accomplished. In practice, this means that a woman must, for instance, have had practical experience in administration before she can become even

a middle-level administrator. A man, on the other hand, may leap-frog the intermediate stages, as President Goheen did at Princeton when he was promoted to the presidency directly from an assistant professorship in Classics. Indeed, as Dean Mattfeld's recent study shows, most top administrators of prestigious colleges or universities come directly from the senior faculty without previous administrative experience, other than perhaps a department chairmanship. Simply because so few women, and those quite clearly exceptional ones, have made it into prominent positions in the past, it is now difficult for people to project for young women the same criteria of future success that they routinely apply to young men. I believe it is largely for this reason that the various irrelevant arguments relating to marital status, motherhood, and housewifely duties are so often cited. Parenthetically, I might note that at the recent annual meeting of the American Council on Education, which was devoted in its entirety to "Women in Higher Education", the concluding address by the president of the Ford Foundation, McGeorge Bundy, focussed on women's right to consider motherhood as a career choice. At any rate those traditional female factors simply constitute the only frame of reference within which most people, male and female, are used to evaluating women. While such considerations are in fact relevant to a discussion of acceptable working conditions for women, an aspect to which I will return shortly, they have nothing to do with quality.

As a first step, then, we will have to discard some of the myths and legends surrounding academic women and have a look at the facts instead. Perhaps the most persistent and insidious myth is that while women have been given all that expensive training and many actually have Ph.D.'s, they really aren't fully committed to their profession. They work part-time, it is said, because they

somehow don't care enough to work full time. This is easy to test by offering good full-time pos: - ong with day care and reasonable maternity leave policies, the latter now mandatory. In any case it is not readily demonstrable that the quality of scholarly output is related to time spent, and even the quantity of work done does not show a simple dependence on full-time status, as will be evident if you examine the publication record of any average department. I might mention in passing that Maria Goeppert Mayer acquired a Nobel prize in physics before she ever held a faculty appointment other than as a part-time lecturer. There is another legend that says women, especially married women with children, aren't interested in scholarship and don't publish. This is not supportable by facts either. Of all the groups studied (men, women, married, single, childless or parents) married women published the most, closely followed by mothers.

Another popular myth is that women are professional dropouts, and that even if they do complete their Ph.D.'s, M.D.'s or law degrees, they will not practice their professions for any length of time. Thus scarce fellowship funds and scarce academic posts are wasted on women who will not stay in the profession long enough to do credit to it. The facts are very different. Helen Astin's studies of academic women demonstrate that there is a direct relationship between the amount of education a women has had and the length of time she stays in her profession. They show further that 91% of women doctorates are still practicing their professions full-time ten years after receiving the degree, despite marriage, and 81% of women doctorates with children are employed full-time. In case you are wondering, only 69% of all men work full-time. In other words, as almost any professor with some experience can testify, not nearly all male doctorates practice the professions

for which they underwent long and costly training, usually at public expense. In the case of men, however, such professional mobility is counted an asset; the doctoral or law degree confers added lustre on many a corporate or government official. Although it contributes very little directly to his professional capacity, no one would argue that his academic training was wasted because he eventually turned to a different field.

For women the situation is quite different; training and experience are assumed to qualify them only for the narrow areas for which they prepared specifically. It is another aspect of the factor I mentioned earlier, our inability to see women's potential for future success in the male frame of reference. We have gradually learned to expect that if a woman has demonstrated success as a teacher or even a scholar, she may continue to do those things successfully. But we cannot envision, as we do all the time for men, that if she brings originality and creative flair to her teaching or scholarship, she may be capable of applying those same qualities to other activities; for example, top administration, a department chairmanship, a government consultancy, or membership on a board of directors. I believe it is this problem, which President Bunting of Radcliffe termed the "climate of non-expectation", which persistently keeps women on the wrong side of the tenure barrier and thus at the bottom of the ladder to academic success.

One of the most articulate and widely heard critics of Affirmative Action has been John Bunzel, president of California State University at San Jose. While paying due deference to the principle of non-discrimination, Mr. Bunzel attacks the efforts to redress the balance by implementing Affirmative Action programs as "reverse discrimination" based on the introduction of false

criteria such as race and sex, and he strongly defends the traditional academic recruiting, hiring, and promotion practices as being based on individual merit rather than consideration of such class attributes. We might inquire, first of all, why he labels discrimination "reverse" when applied to white males. There seems to be a tacit assumption here that white males should be preferred, and that anything else is contrary to the natural order of things. Secondly, we have seen that the "false" criteria of race and sex have indeed been with us for a long time, and I could not agree more strongly that they have no place in a university. None of us would wish to make a case for hiring, preferentially or otherwise, women or minority group members who are truly not qualified. We are just as concerned as men with the maintenance of academic quality - and for all the same reasons, because we prefer to be associated with good institutions rather than mediocre ones, and because we believe in excellence for its own sake and wish to preserve it. We simply do not believe that excellence is associated only with white males.

Neither do we believe that the requirements for more open and broadly-based recruiting efforts are in any way infringements of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The right of universities to be free of the control of the state extends to the areas of intellectual inquiry, the subject matter of teaching, and the policies which serve those purposes, but not to the treatment of individuals by the institution. The university's existence within the larger framework of society is already governed by the laws of that society, and is dependent on financial and moral support from that society. Thus its autonomy is circumscribed by a great many constraints and considerations - what actions are legally and morally acceptable

to the public, what programs taxpayers, legislatures, or alumni will or will not support, and in some deplorable cases even which faculty members may or may not be hired because of public opinion. But the autonomy of the university does not supercede the laws which safeguard the rights of individuals. Affirmative Action guidelines do not dictate that a woman or a black must be hired in preference to a white male regardless of qualifications, however often or loudly their opponents choose to interpret them that way. They do dictate, however, that irrelevant considerations of race and sex may not be used to abridge an individual's right to a fair assessment of her or his qualifications for a position - no more and no less. If universities consider that mandate an infringement of their institutional autonomy, they lay themselves open to the question of whether they deserve to be autonomous at all.

Academic freedom, on the other hand, is the right of the individual to study and teach what her or his mind dictates, not what the state or the institution prescribes. Like all kinds of freedom, it is not absolute and it is fragile. It is subject to erosion by many influences and pressures - by the same financial, moral and legal limitations which define institutional autonomy and by considerations of personal advancement and even profit - but not by non-discriminatory personnel practices.

Underneath all of the rhetoric against Affirmative Action and the roadblocks being put in the way of its implementation there runs a current of fear that the growing presence of women on the campus will produce a change in the nature of the academic enterprise. And of course it will, and in all sincerity I can only say, "Hurrah": We are a long way from perfection in our universities, and any change which will broaden the base of

intellectual inquiry and lay the foundations of more truly human social practices can only be for the better.

As a scientist I know that men and women are different in many ways, both obvious and subtle, and undoubtedly in some ways we don't know about yet. Possibly they differ intellectually. All the measures established so far, mostly by men, don't show that but I can't rule out the possibility that more careful research, perhaps by women, would. At any rate it seems certain that there are no significant differences in intellectual capacity, but there may well be differences in intellectual orientation. We are not likely to know until universities stop trying to assess us by how far we deviate from the male norm and society stops trying to force us all into the Freudian female stereotype.

As a first step, we need working conditions in the universities that take account of the obvious differences between men and women. There is no reason why maternity leave cannot be granted on the same basis as any other medical leave, with appropriate benefits and full retention of seniority. Childrearing leaves, for students or faculty, are no more disruptive than leaves for military or other government service. Part-time appointments with full professional status can make more diverse talents available at almost no increase in cost and can broaden an institution's outlook by rooting it more solidly in daily human concerns. They would probably benefit the academy even more than the individual. A more liberal view of part-time study, especially at the graduate level, along with loosening of the lockstep approach to credit and degree requirements, would open up a whole new talent pool.

What if there were more fundamental changes? What if it turns out that women really have different intellectual interests? That they are more concerned with keeping the earth liveable than with

colonizing the moon? That they would rather work on better transportation systems or better medical care than a better military rocket? Would it be so destructive of the male ego to really learn more about what it is to be human - for both males and females? Isn't half the human race worthy of more honest intellectual inquiry? Might it not be that we would all redirect our efforts toward the greater benefit of humanity instead of its destruction?

Finally, are the worlds which men have made and the universities which they have constructed to suit their requirements really so perfect that there is no room for improvement?

Some time ago Dr. Edgar Berman, a prominent physician, thundered that the "raging storms of female hormones" affect women's judgment, rendering them unfit to assume serious responsibilities and make decisions. "What" he asked desperately, "would have happened if a woman had been in charge at the Bay of Pigs?" He got his answer from Dr. Estelle Ramey, herself an endocrinologist and president-elect of American Women in Science: "Well, fellows, what did happen at the Bay of Pigs?"

In many ways we find ourselves in a Bay of Pigs situation. From our point of view, things could hardly be much worse, and support of the purposes of Affirmative Action is surely an essential step in eliminating persisting discrimination. The hardest problem we face is that of deeply ingrained attitudes and sexual stereotypes, and it is high time to try some new approaches. Even the most basic problems can yield to novel solutions, an idea which is illustrated by the story of the arrival of our first astronauts on Mars. True to expectations, they found the Martians to be round little green people with spindly legs, protruding eyes, and antennae waving from their heads. But they were surprised to see what looked like a huge factory complex on an adjacent hill, with streams of round

little green people coming out of one building. They asked their new friends about this place, and one of them said it was a people factory - they made arms in one building, spindly legs in another, round green torsos in a third, and little round heads with antennae in the fourth. The last building was the final assembly plant, with the finished products walking out. The astronauts, of course, were most astonished, and finally managed to say, "That isn't the way we do it." "Really?" said the Martians, equally astonished, "Then how do you do it?" So the astronauts told them, and the Martians all collapsed in helpless laughter. Finally their leader pulled himself together enough to gasp, "But that's how we make cars!"

I look forward to the day when there will be no discrimination based on either the color or the shape of our skins.